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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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MAY DAY 2016 WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE









OUR FIGHT

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

◗ the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✯Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✯While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Bosses' Rivalry Drives Imperialist Aid

April earthquakes in Ecuador and Japan have devastated the lives of hundreds of thousands of working-class families. The response to these capitalist crises by the rulers of the United States and China reflects their imperialist ambitions—and an escalating competition that points to the broader global conflict to come.

Competition Trumps Compassion

In Ecuador, some 700 people are dead and tens of thousands injured and homeless. The calamity has disproportionately struck Black and indigenous workers, putting the racism of this capitalist crisis on full display. Their lives mean nothing to China and U.S. imperialists or to local bosses. In fact, small capitalist countries like Ecuador play both sides of the imperialist rivalry.

What did the largest imperialist power do—beyond ensuring that its embassy stayed open for business? The U.S. sent 12 Air Force troops and $100,000 worth of supplies. President Rafael Correa broke "away from U.S. influence in Latin America. He refused to sign a free trade agreement with the U.S. or renew the U.S. lease on a military base in Ecuador, which expired in 2009" (Counterpunch, 4/27).

Meanwhile, to protect its oil and energy interests, Chinese bosses are sending $9.5 million worth of supplies and $2 million aid in response to the earthquake (China Central Television, 4/28). As it pivots to Latin America, historically the U.S. backyard, China has monopolized as much as 90 percent of Ecuador's oil exports and recently signed a new oil exploration deal:

> *"Andes Petroleum Ecuador, a consortium of two Chinese state-owned firms—China National Petroleum Corp. and China Petroleum and Chemical Corp…purchased the rights to explore two oil blocks in the Amazon…The deal was worth about $80 million" (Los Angeles Times, 1/29).*

In effect, the national ruling class of Ecuador has traded one imperialist master for another. A rising China is bad news for workers in Ecuador. In December 2014, an underground river in Ecuador burst into a tunnel at a Chinese hydroelectric plant, killing 14 workers. This is no isolated incident. Ecuadorean workers on the Chinese-run project have constantly protested about dangerous working conditions, health care, food and wages.

Let's not be fooled. The Chinese imperialists are just as dangerous to the working class as the U.S. imperialists. Indigenous workers in Ecuador protested the new oil deal with signs reading, "Chinese firms, get off of my land!"

Japan: U.S. Servant

By contrast, Japan—where at least 48 people were killed and 1,500 injured on the southern island of Kyushu—received prompt support from the U.S. This is not surprising. Japan has long been the Pacific lynchpin of the U.S. empire, providing critical support as U.S. imperialists scramble to counter China's economic and military buildup.

Japan is home to 23 U.S. military bases and about 50,000 U.S. troops. It is also a lead member of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade agreement to enable the U.S. to exploit markets, cheap labor and raw materials in the world's fastest-growing region—and contain China at the same time. As China threatens to eliminate critical shipping routes and claim huge oil reserves in the South China Sea, Japan's prime minister has welcomed the TPP:

"This is the birth of an economic zone that has 40 percent of the world's gross (domestic product), one that is protected by free and fair rules. Through it, the U.S., Japan and other countries participating in TPP will achieve great profit and gain chances for growth" (Wall Street Journal, 4/5).

These promises of prosperity thinly veil the U.S. rulers' aim to control the region's economy. With the U.S. and China locked in an escalating competition for global dominance, U.S. aid to Japan and its minimal support for Ecuador are signs of the intensifying imperialist rivalry.

Need International Solidarity

While the U.S. bosses spend billions on their presidential elections to line up the next imperialist-in-chief, workers throughout the U.S. are organizing solidarity campaigns and donations for earthquake victims. We don't need the bosses' humanitarian imperialism; from Ecuador and Japan to Syria and Iraq, capitalism leaves workers in rubble. An attack on workers anywhere is an attack on workers everywhere. From Ecuador to Japan, the working class needs to fight back with international solidarity. You can back the fightback in Ecuador by waging class struggle against the bosses wherever you are.

Progressive Labor Party, with the leadership of millions, will one day bury these bloody bosses seven feet under. Join our global communist movement! We aim to build a world where natural disasters will be problems to solve by organized collectives, not imperialist gambits for profit.✪

LOS ANGELES



LOS ANGELES, May 1—Progressive Labor Party marched with hundreds of workers in the streets of downtown. We joined a march for immigrant rights raising our red flags high. We carried a long banner that was made by a friend of the Party which proclaimed, "FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM!, ¡LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO!"

Walking along in a march dedicated to reforming capitalism, we boldly sang, "Fight for Communism, Power to the Workers." Marchers and workers on the streets took 400 of our CHALLENGEs. We made contacts on the march including two youth, who after seeing our banner said that they love communism and asked how they can get more information about our organization. Another new base member from the communist work in the church agreed to join a Party study group. The march culminated a weekend of class struggle for the Party.

Celebration of Communism

The night before, we held a rousing dinner, with more than 50 comrades and friends attending. Accompanied by guitar, claves, tambourine and congas, our group of teachers, students, garment workers, health workers, church members, musicians and artistic workers enjoyed a multiracial evening of singing, poetry, speeches and spoken word in Spanish and English.

We also had lively discussion inspired by the questions, "Can capitalism be destroyed and communism built without a party to lead that struggle? To succeed, what features does such a Party need?" That conversation, which could have gone on for much longer, will continue as we work with our comrades and friends in the class struggle against racism, sexism, nationalism and imperialism.

An important part of that struggle is to increase the readership of CHALLENGE and we started that with new subscriptions to this communist paper. The evening continued with a speech on the state of the world and a call to action. Organizing for a communist society means getting rid of capitalism, a political system that exploits and terrorizes workers worldwide and is leading the dominant imperialists toward a world war that they expect the workers to fight in. We say we will fight for communism! The international working class shall be the human race!✪

OAKLAND



Oakland, May 1—More than 40 members & friends of PLP had a well-organized and enthusiastic contingent in this year's May Day March. Annually, a coalition of immigrant rights and community groups organizes for May Day. We represented the multiracial, multi-generational, international working class.

Our banners and chants in English and Spanish put communism up front. We shared chants with other groups, and some joined in with ours. "Fight for communism, Power to the workers!" (more next issue).

Haiti—Inspiration to Continue Fighting

HAITI, May 1—Revolutionary greetings to all May Day marchers from PLP and our friends in Haiti! The Progressive Labor Party here has given communist leadership at a march in the capital, organized a workers' study group in another provincial city, and concluded with the Internationale in Creole and calls to join the fight for communism.

This May Day, PLP continues to create confidence in the working class, strengthening and enlarging our base of communist fighters and friends. Marching in Port-au-Prince, the capital, with several trade unions, we led the marchers with chants such as "Down with capitalism, long live communism!" and "We workers have nothing to lose, let's march on the bosses!"

The main demand of the unions' march was to increase the minimum wage to 500 gourdes/day (9$USD). Our leaflet took a sharp look at the conditions workers here and worldwide are facing, concluding that the international working class needs an international revolutionary communist party, the PLP. We said that workers must unite in a single struggle and build the Party that will lead workers to victory, to communist revolution and an egalitarian society that will meet the needs of workers who create all value. "Workers, unite, as one class, we have the same problems and must have the same struggle."

Elsewhere, in a provincial city, PLP organized a meeting with about 30 people, rural and unemployed workers, students and professionals. Our mission was to see that we are part of a single class. We talked about the history of May Day, showing how the bosses give their watered-down idea about this historic day to try to erase from our memory the long history of struggle—often victorious—of the working class.

Down with Capitalism! Now What?

We talked about different workers' struggles around the world and showed how capitalism is what links them together: we are all fighting the same enemy. We also unmasked the role of capitalism in underpinning the bourgeois state. The participants criticized the capitalist system and came to the conclusion that it must be overthrown. Of course, once this was agreed upon, the next thought is to question how to do this. A PL'er noted that this was the question Lenin asked in his book What Is To Be Done?

Some friends replied that we need solidarity between workers to struggle against the bourgeoisie. One PL'er went further, calling to build a revolutionary communist party that fights for an egalitarian society, without different social classes, a society based on providing for the needs of workers, a society without money.

Another comrade added that we shouldn't be fearful of communism and invited the participants to continue to organize activities that will sharpen the contradictions between the bosses and the working class, and to join the PLP! After the meeting, comrades and friends continued the day with a dinner, some sharp discussions and the singing of the Internationale in Creole—the first time for all of us, singing the same words as workers around the world, in our own language.

In all, our modest contribution to May Day has inspired us to keep on fighting and building the PLP.✪

COLOMBIA

To our fellow workers, comrades, friends and supporters of PLP we send militant and warm greeting from Colombia. We're getting ready to celebrate May Day, the International Workers' Day. This is yet another year of bearing the capitalist yoke and its nefarious consequences, aggravated by the economic crisis product of inter imperialist contradictions, and their push for maximum profits and over production, which create the threat of another world war.

The gloomy outlook and reality that's the life of the working class is almost the same around the world: Wage slavery, unemployment, lack of medical care, poor education, drug addiction, pollution, deforestation, fascism, sexism, individualism, racism and nationalism reinforced by religious zealotry and alienating democretinism. In short: all the evils of capitalism.

For these reasons, comrades and workers of the world, we must steel ourselves against adversity: Now more than ever we need to develop PLP's line. We must be self-critical of our work to build a stronger party both in quality and quantity. The dark night must come to an end, but we need to sharpen the class struggle, be more creative, consistent and dialectical to bring it about, and demonstrate the historical viability of a communist revolution. The imperialists and their revisionist accomplices want us to believe that revolutionary struggles are illusions, a thing of the past or obsolete and that now we must work hand in hand with our exploiter, that there is nothing better that class collaboration.

Everything we do for the communist cause counts. In this corner of the world we are organizing and lending our support to our class brothers in their rightful struggles. We're trying to establish new party clubs, and with our literature and revolutionary messages we participate in political meetings with workers and students. Onward, comrades of the world, for an international communist revolution we struggle to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and build a new communist society.

NEW YORK CITY



continued from back page

group of mainly women led the marchers' chants to "shut this racist system down!" The only answer to these racist police murders is to join PLP and help us continue to build a fighting international, revolutionary Party. From the Americas to Africa and Asia, working-class women, men and youth involved with PLP are spreading this communist struggle across the globe.

On the sound truck, one of our chant leaders was the sister of Shantel Davis, a 23-year-old woman killed by the racist NYPD in June 2012. Since her sister's murder, this emerging communist working-class leader has responded to PL's urgent approach towards agitation and our patient approach towards base-building. She's overcome many illusions about getting justice for her sister from the bosses' political system and has rejected the anti-communist lies from politicians and preachers.

Other family members of our working-class brothers and sisters murdered by the kkkops also joined with, and gave leadership to our march, including families of Kyam Livingston, Eric Garner and Tyrone West. Each of these families in the march is a precious steel nail in the coffin of capitalism.

Bosses Can't Erase Our Militant History

The spirit and militancy of the march showed that PLP is a real alternative to the false promises the bosses' politicians make every four years, when it's time to elect a new imperialist-in-chief. Our May Day march marks the day we review our forces in our fight to become a mass working-class Party, organizing with the goal of communist revolution! Our future is bright: marchers and some workers on the sidewalk raised their fists as we chanted, "What do we want? COMMUNISM! When do we want it? NOW!"

At the conclusion of the march, the keynote speech given by a Black transit worker connected the current conditions of the international working class and the need to fight for communism. He began:

What a time to be alive! We have just finished another successful May Day march, a tradition that goes back to 1886, when our bothers and sisters were murdered by the cops for fighting for the 8-hour day. The fight and killing of our predecessors is motivation for communists to overthrow the bosses' society and build the system of communism.

The bosses rule society through a violent and coercive state. They spend billions to legitimize their murderous system, yet every dollar they have spent has fallen short of covering up the inherent flaws of their system.

From the beginning of capitalism, racism and sexism have been the key tools the bosses used to divide and conquer the working class and today is no different. Today they sell the myth to ALL workers, but especially to Black and Latin workers, that white workers are responsible for hundreds of years of their exploitation under capitalism.

Meanwhile, they sell the myth to white workers that they are protected from exploitation and the bosses' terror because they are "privileged," thereby they have more in common with slave-owners and war-makers than their fellow workers.

The truth is that from the very inception of capitalism historically workers have fought alongside each other. The bosses, politicians, universities, media coerce us away from seeing that the only group who's responsible for, and benefits from racism is the ruling class.

Who benefits when the bosses pay white workers a little more than Black workers or pay men more than women?

It's not the white workers or men! It's bosses who reap the difference! They're the only group that wins from a divided working class.

"One major challenge for us is the pessimism built about the possibility of unity between Black and white workers, women and men. Living under the bosses' system, they have tried to erase our class's memory of a time when Black and white, women and men workers lived and fought together against capitalism and for a better world.

After citing examples of global fightback, he ended this inspirational speech by saying: "The fight for communism can't stop, won't stop because workers can, workers did, and workers will continue to fight back! Long live communism! Power to the workers! Join PLP!"

We then sang the Internationale, the communist anthem, in both Spanish and English. We ended this amazing day with a picnic in the park with delicious box lunches. Some sang Creole songs around a drum circle in the park.

PLP is a fighting international Party, and our fight to build a mass, multiracial communist movement is growing. This May Day in New York City, in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, was both a celebration and a call to refuse to vote in the bosses' elections but instead to join the revolutionary fight for communism by joining Progressive Labor Party!✪

Verizon Workers: Reject Politicians, Shut It All Down

NEWARK, NJ, April 27—Over one hundred Verizon workers and supporters from several local organizations participated in a Solidarity Rally here today in front of Verizon Headquarters.

Workers were in a fighting mood, and responded warmly to several militant speeches given by local fighters. Workers loudly chanted, "The bosses say cut back, we say fight back," "Shut it down, shut it tight, the bosses can't profit when the workers unite," and more. Scores of cars passing on Broad Street honked their horns in solidarity with the strikers. Almost all of the Verizon workers took CHALLENGE. Several were reading it while picketing. Some workers thanked a PLP comrade who was distributing the paper for bringing it to the line.

Speakers included Newark teachers, and others from several organizations, including the War Against Poverty Coalition, which highlights the fight against mass racist unemployment and poverty, the Newark NAACP, and People's Organization for Progress. Two union officials also spoke.

Politicos Try to Co-Opt

From the beginning of this strike, CWA and IBEW local and regional union leaders have tried to steer it towards allying with politicians who are supposedly pro-worker. A rally the first day of the strike featured five or six local politicos, including Ras Baraka, the mayor of Newark. The liberal politicians blather on about how Verizon is eliminating "middle class jobs" and "destroying the American Dream." These liberal politicians and unions offered workers momentary solutions. They are always ready to betray workers at a moment's notice. The reality is that, under capitalism, reforms won by the working class through valiant struggle are always subject to being taken back by the capitalists, who continue to hold state power—until there is a revolution to destroy their class rule.

One fighter who spoke exposed that liberal bosses are always trying to cover up that competition and the periodic economic crises built into capitalism constantly force individual capitalists to find any number of ways to reduce costs. With Verizon, it is outsourcing call center jobs, downsizing wireline positions, and "flexibly" moving workers up and down the East Coast to meet their profit needs. All of these moves will eventually beset the working class with more low wages, unemployment, and poverty.

It is the nature of capitalism that is driving the destruction of the fewer and fewer jobs with better pay and benefits that still exist. And it is capitalist-created racism and segregation that weakens the working class response to these attacks. The unemployment rate amongst black workers is consistently double that of white workers. These high unemployment rates make it easier for the bosses to find low wage non-union contractors who bring in workers willing to work for less.

None of the politicians running for U.S. president, including social democrat Bernie Sanders, has an an interest in ending these capitalist-caused disasters for our class. They all play their role in keeping capitalism running, while trying to win workers to vote for them, spouting lies that this horrid system can be fixed. No amount of "good unions" and "good" reforms can change capitalism into a worker-run society. Workers like those in Verizon can run the world, with an organized international party like Progressive Labor Party.

Key: Working-Class Unity

PLP supports the struggle of Verizon workers. We call on Verizon workers to recognize the incredible power they hold. This strike has the potential to influence workers everywhere. While Verizon bosses have has returned to the bargaining table, they have plans in the works to use large numbers of scabs and to cut off the strikers' health insurance in order to break the strike. But workers possess their own power: with help from other workers—such as transit workers, and education workers in public schools and City University of New York—they could use their collective strength to shut down the whole city.

This kind of action takes class-conscious leadership and a decisive break by the workers from all the politicians and the "play by the rules" rhetoric of the top union bosses. It takes organization and devotion to the cause of the working class. Only communist ideas and leadership will inspire hundreds of thousands of workers to take that type of revolutionary action.

A communist analysis shows that our labor as workers is what produces all the economic value in society. So why shouldn't we have a system where workers, collectively, under the leadership of their communist party, PLP, decide how that value is used? We don't need the bosses and their profit-driven system. Workers' revolutionary fight to take the bosses down will open a new worker-run world where exploitation, economic crises and racism will become a distant memory. Verizon workers—join PLP and give leadership to the international working class!✪

Transit Workers Rally Against Racist Attacks

WASHINGTON, DC, April 9—At the Metro transit system in D.C. (WMATA), PLP is fighting back and leading the struggle against management's cutbacks, racist disciplinary procedures, sellout union leaders, and ultimately, capitalism itself.

Today, we joined transit workers in a rally in front of the Jackson Graham Building (management headquarters) to protest a forum on rider assaults on bus operators. The forum was co-sponsored by management and traitorous union misleaders.

For years, transit workers in D.C. have been facing cutbacks and attacks from the management bosses. A program of austerity has threatened pensions and wages, which were won primarily through the militant communist-led wildcat strike of the 1970s. Metro bosses have also intensified attacks on workers through a new racist discipline matrix that primarily targets Black workers, and a vicious new background check policy that reaches back decades and has led to multiple firings of veteran drivers. Recently, workers who have acted in self-defense after being attacked by bus riders are themselves fired or otherwise punished! These racist assaults are part and parcel of the broader capitalist scheme to intimidate workers and rob them of any gains won and defended through direct class struggle. Our enemy is not the riders, but this capitalist system. Riders and workers must unite to challenge the transit bosses!

To throw salt on the open wound, WMATA management and their cronies and class-collaborators in the union have called for ridiculous policy reforms to address the string of rider-instigated attacks on bus operators and other workers. Management has suggested placing cops on buses to monitor behavior and has even printed pamphlets urging workers to practice restraint when dealing with riders. All this, as if workers are not capable of defending themselves and intelligent enough to know how to act in confrontational situations! More importantly, the bosses are trying to pit us against our natural allies, the working-class riders, while fomenting a false unity with our class enemies: the bosses and the cops.

Anger was high at the rally. One bus operator said that we should go inside and disrupt the meeting. The bus operator correctly pointed out that workers have the numbers and power to confront capitalist bosses and union misleaders.

KKKops Off Buses

Throughout the rally, we led militant chants such as "bosses can't profit when workers strike, shut it down, shut it tight!" We demanded that WMATA address more fundamental issues regarding the assaults on bus operators. We refused cops on buses. Such a policy would entrench the blatantly racist role of police officers as overseers of the working class. The rally instead called for fully subsidized transit fare as a solution to many transit problems, including the assaults on operators. If the bosses were serious about working-class safety and health, transportation would be free. Not only would such a reform benefit the working class of DC, but separating the job of fare collection from that of actually operating the bus means that riders would have little incentive to attack operators for problems regarding their fare. Of course, the bosses' refusal only exposes their role, which is to exploit and divide the working class.

Another rally was planned that is intended to stop traffic. We will continue to fight for better working conditions and an end to racist and sexist attacks., PLP will continue to work with these workers to turn their reform struggles into the fight for a communist world.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



From Ferguson to Flatbush

At 27 weeks pregnant, my partner and I packed up our car in Buffalo and headed to NYC to join in the May Day festivities. A couple of friends new to political activism, but eager to stand up for fellow workers joined us on the trip. Donned in all red, we arose from the subway at Flatbush and Nostrand. We walked towards the chanting and were soon greeted by a few of our PL comrades, who we've built quite a strong bond with over the last year, since first meeting during protests in Ferguson.

Our group of four from Buffalo ended up holding the leading banner at the front of the march, which read "Long Live Communism!" We each grabbed one of the custom screen-printed "Revolt Don't Vote" shirts.

A flatbed truck with over 20 speakers pulled up and positioned itself at the front of the march. We got pumped up when we realized the speakers would be bumping some classic hip-hop and dancehall instrumentals througgout the march, as comrades chanted in unison to the beat. My partner and I absolutely love the idea, and first used music during protest a couple years back in Buffalo to commemorate Fred Hampton. Music is as powerful as the people who create it and can change the entire dynamic of an action, centering and energizing the people.

It was a beautiful sight to behold. With Mom and Dad side by side, screaming "Koupé tet!" ["cut off their heads" in Haitian Creole], my unborn child, right at the front of the march, got his first taste of uprising. With swollen ankles and smile on my face, I pushed on to the end and finished off the two-mile journey at Prospect Park. The crowd remained and listened intently to voices championing the power of the people. The revolutionary spirit was truly in the air.The crowd was rejuvenated by the speeches and at their conclusion all were welcomed to enjoy a May Day picnic in the park.

We were asked to do a quick interview at the conclusion of the march for an upcoming PLP video. We offered our perspectives on first meeting the PLP in Ferguson, growing our relationship with the Party, and how impactful these developing bonds have been in our lives, both personally and politically.

Later that evening, I shared some of the images from the day with friends back home, one of which was a shot of my garishly swollen ankles. One concerned person remarked, "that can be a sign of toxemia!" I assured them I was fine and just needed rest, and that the only thing toxic to my baby's health was capitalism. Walking a couple uncomfortable miles is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the lengths my growing family will go to see the fall of the bosses and the rise of commUNITY.

★

My Experience at May Day

This year, students and education workers took a bus from the South Bronx to Brooklyn. Our bus ride was spirited and militant as we shared our reasons for coming to May Day and sang songs together. Here are a few reflections about May Day from our group.

My first May Day march was a great experience. I like how people reacted to the march sympathetically. I think it's great to fight for our rights and against the injustice that is going on.

✧

I had a great experience at May Day. There were so many different groups of people. It was a beautiful experience to see a wide range of working class people come together and fight against the ruling class. In the moment, I felt that me and everyone else felt a sense of invincibility. Before going to May Day, I had my doubts about the working class becoming powerful enough to overthrow the wealthy class. After May Day, I believe that united we can change the system and make a world that works for us.

✧

The march was well organized and synchronized before and during the journey to the park. I liked seeing people of all ages, mothers and parents with their children, young women and men. It was really exciting to see all these people united, chanting, waving flags and their hands to show their lack of conformity with the system.

Moreover, I was impressed how drivers honked and people through windows in the building made signal of support and agreement all the way to the park. At the beginning of the march, I saw people enthusiastic but as it progressed there was more joy! I enjoyed the way people behaved before and during the march.

✧

I loved the sound truck. The group was dynamic and moving as they led chants and beats through the streets of Flatbush. I knew some of the women on the truck and know that they had lost a family member at the hands of the police. It was truly an inspiration to see and hear them on the sound truck!

★

Salute to the Fierce Women on the May Day Truck

The Brooklyn May Day march this year was inspiring beyond words. On the truck were Black and Latin women whose loved ones—sister, brother, daughter, son—were murdered by the despicable kkkops. These women are living proof that kkkapitalism is a murderous system and that our loved ones deserve communism, nothing less.

This one woman in particular led me to tears. As she screamed the names of each youth murdered, and we responded with "Shut it down!" I felt the anger in her voice. The music paused. Her raw voice echoed down Flatbush. It was the sound of a woman who has to face the fact that capitalism murdered her sister—and no amount of police reforms will bring justice for Shantel Davis. It was the voice of a woman who still dares to fight back.

I salute this working-class woman. She is my hero, as are all the other working-class women in and around the Party who model how to fight, how to respond to crisis, and how to spread the fierce working-class love for a communist world.

I've seen many organizations, many countries, and many people. Only in Progressive Labor Party have I witnessed such a staunch example of anti-sexism. Only in PLP did I get a glimpse of what women will be like under communism.

I had joined PLP for many of the obvious reasons—a world without racism and sexism, no borders, no war, and no money. A world where everyone gets what they need and live their lives to potentials never dreamt of in our current material reality.

But there's another reason that I joined. This reason is one I get to witness in my lifetime. I joined PLP because of the way the Party treated Black workers, especially Black women. I grew up in a capitalist culture where I learned anti-Black racism before I learned to speak English. I was taught to be thankful that at least I am not Black, though I always got hurt for being "too black, too dark, too angry."

I saw how women are beaten, degraded, and exploited until they have internalized the racist sexism of this society. I've witnessed women rise against this sexism, their resolve to continue fighting day in and day out, but still lost without a communist vision. That's what global capitalism does to the working class.

So to witness an atmosphere where Black workers, Black women workers, give leadership—that's powerful, to say the least. I am grateful to be part of this international communist movement. Being part of PLP showed me how resilient and inspiring the working-class is. Today reminded me of the PLP song, "Streets of London," the line that goes like this: "so how can you tell me you are lonely and say for you that the sun don't shine." One day, every child, woman, and man in every corner of the earth will bask in the glory of the red sun.

★

Another Smashing May Day

Another smashing May Day! The workers of Brooklyn welcomed us in grand fashion.

My first May Day march was 70 years ago in 1946 in New York City — 250,000 workers and youth streaming down 8th Avenue in Manhattan from 34th Street to 17th Street and then east to Union Square.

That one was organized by the old Communist Party. But just as they accommodated themselves to capitalism and abandoned the fight for communist revolution, they also abandoned May Day marches by the early 1950s.

However, in 1971 it was Progressive Labor Party

Letters Continued

that picked up the banners of the international working class as part of the fight for communism and has celebrated and marched on May Day ever since — an achievement to be proud of. PLP truly represents the future. Congratulations comrades!

★

Fundraiser, A Collective Treat for Budding Communists

Our middle school May Day dessert fundraiser demonstrated that revolutionary politics, creative collaboration, and some sweets are a good mix. Political artists from 6 to 60 worked together to produce some awesome banners and posters for this May Day March (see page 8).

This event was organized by our middle school study group, which has met consistently since the beginning of the 2015 school year. Developing our ideas through friendly political struggle resulted in some great ideas. We had a blast drawing and painting while eating delicious and beautifully designed dessert treats made by our comrades and friends.

The highlights of the day were several speeches presented by our middle-school revolutionary youth explaining why everyone present should join PLP's May Day march in Brooklyn. These young people also organized over a dozen of their middle school friends, parents, and siblings to attend this event. We also raised funds to help pay the costs of our May Day march.

In contrast to the decadent, frivolous capitalist society around us, we need to experience more of these moments of multi-racial revolutionary celebration, collaboration between young and old, and a sense of unity with the working people of the world.

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Fascist Trump, but Need to Attack All Politicians

Our Unitarian church in Indianapolis, Indiana had a forum and presentation on U.S. presidential elections. I gave the analysis and acted as moderator. I tried to incorporate various aspects of PLP's antiracist line when possible.

My presentation was on Trump and how he is an open fascist running for president. I talked about historical similarities with Hitler. I mentioned how Trump is a ruling-class racist trying to divide and conquer white workers by tricking them into thinking he is their "friend" while painting Black, Muslim, and undocumented workers as " the enemy." Trump is a fascist trying to use racist and sexist speech to divide our class from itself. He is America's version of fascist Marie Le Pen of France.

This racism will hurt white workers in long run. I mentioned white workers need to have multiracial unity to oppose Trump. Also, I mentioned the hate speech by Trump is causing hate crimes against Muslim and Mexican workers. In Fort Wayne, recently, three Blacks Muslim men were executed while Ft. Wayne cops say, "No racism involved."

Self critically, I should have showed that Clinton and Sanders are just as bad. I told them about how opposing Trump in Chicago was inspirational as it was to see multiracial Black, white, Latin, and Asian do this. We had a modest turnout of Black and white workers. In the short term, these capitalist politicians like Trump are being opposed through protests. What workers need is a communist revolution led by PLP to take down the entire rotten capitalist system!



Debtors' Jail Hits Home

In school, in history, we learned that in Britain and the U.S. in the "old days" of 19th century, people were put into prison if they couldn't pay their debts. And we were told that that bizarre practice was abolished. But I've learned from recent events that debtors' prisons do still exist!

After Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson in 2014, the news spread about how small counties in Missouri and elsewhere balanced their budgets on the backs of the Black working class. Workers were fined for the smallest unlawful errors. If unable to pay the fines, they were arrested. Then there would be more fines and jail time—an endless cycle. Many others and I probably thought it was all stuff that happened to other people.

Last year, I got a cell phone ticket, and then a speeding ticket. I paid the tickets, over $300 between them. The end, right? No way. My state's office of safety sent me a letter demanding another fine, $525 on top of what I've paid, in order to keep my driver's license. They claim it's for "safety education."

And finally, a friend of mine was arrested for theft in Maryland. She was sentenced to probation. A good deal, we thought, because she didn't get jail time. But, she had to pay $207 in court fees and other fines. And, that was only the beginning! Now she has to pay a $175 fee to do her community service and another $50 a month for supervised probation.

What if you don't have the money? Well, just like in Missouri, it's jail time for you. This shows that debtors' prison is very much a practice of U.S. capitalist government today. The bosses and their state find a plethora of ways to steal from the working class and keep us oppressed.

★

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

KKKourts just as blatantly racist as kkkops

NYT, 4/15 — …a report by a panel commissioned by Mayor Rahm Emanuel of Chicago found racism in the city's Police Department is rampant: Blacks are disproportionately subject to traffic stops, Tasers and street stops…account for an appalling 74 percent of the 404 people shot by the Chicago police between 2008 and 2015.

What the report does not say…is that the rottenness is not confined to the Police Department. Racist practices extend far into the criminal courts. Indeed they are the very foundation of the cases that enter into the court system. The hands of …judges and prosecutors are just as dirty as the bigots in blue….

…police officers who were scheduled to testify…. would sit in the jury box, next to the judge…and would dutifully teach…how black men really were "dogs"….

Prosecutors and judges often participated in this culture. They spoke in overtly racist ways in court….In their eyes, defendants were to blame for their poverty, an ideology that justified a host of abuses of defendants, victims, witnesses or anyone with black or brown skin who found themselves in court….

…Attorneys….knew that to blow the whistle or in any way resist this culture could cost you your reputation, your job or even your safety….

The judge laughed at the fabrication of police reports, as if it were a novelty, rather than an abuse of power….

…Judges and prosecutors…willingly admitted that police perjury was part of the culture of the court system in Cook County….

…The police have a hand in controlling the types of prosecutors who get promoted, and the types of justice defendants receive in our courts.

U.S. guilty for Mid-East chaos

GW, 4/15 [letter] — …Much of the chaos and anger in the Middle East arose from U.S. intervention in the region.

To mention just a few: the CIA-backed overthrow of the elected leader Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran in 1953, and U.S. support of the Shah; support for Israel and its annexation of Palestinian territory; support for the military coup in Egypt…; U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and its bombing in Yemen; and most egregiously, the invasion of Iraq that led to the emergence of Isis….

…The flood of refugees from the Middle East and the recent terrorist attacks…are in large part the result of…U.S. intervention.

It is the height of arrogance for Obama to suggest that it is now a European obligation to sort out the chaos that the U.S. has created.

Slaves built Georgetown University

NYT, 4/23 — Bankers, merchants and manufacturers all profited from the slave trade, as did companies that insured slaving ships and their cargo. And more than a dozen universities have acknowledged ties to slavery. Even so, some…paper over the role that slavery played in their founding and early history.

Such denials are impossible in the harrowing history of slavery at Georgetown University….In 1838, the Jesuits running the college…sold 272 African-American men, women and children into a hellish life on sugar plantations in the South to finance the college's continued operation….

The sale…stands out for its sheer size and the directness of its relationship to the existence and fortunes of one of the country's top Catholic universities….one of history's worst crimes against humanity….

…The Jesuits were among the largest slaveholders in the nation….Historian Craig Wilder notes…the Catholic Church was fully involved in with slavery in the colonial period….Income from slave plantations….allowed the church to survive…and underwrote the church's expansion….

…Wilder writes, "Rather than retreating from slaveholding, the bishops built their church by tracking the westward expansion of plantation slavery"….

At Georgetown, slavery and scholarship were inextricably linked. The college relied on its plantation to help pay for its operations….The sale of the African-American men, women and children staved off its ruin.

No overtime pay, profits double

NYT, 4/21 — Half a century ago, overtime pay was the norm, with more than 60 percent of salaried employees qualifying….Only about 8 percent qualify today. If you feel…you're working longer hours for less money than your parents did, it's…because you are.

Today, if you…earn more than $23,600…a year, you don't automatically qualify for overtime: That means every extra hour you work, you work free….

Everybody knows Americans are overworked…. Americans now report working an average of 47 hours a week — not the supposed standard 40 — while 18 percent report working more than 60 hours….

…The longer and harder we work for the same wage, the fewer jobs there are for others, the higher unemployment goes….That helps explain why over the last 30 years, corporate profits have doubled from about 6 percent of gross domestic product to about 12 percent, while wages have fallen by almost the exact same amount. The erosion of overtime…is one of the main factors leading to worsening inequality.

U.S. corporations hide trillions in tax havens

GW, 4/22 — U.S. corporate giants such as Apple, Walmart and General Electric have stashed $1.4 trillion in tax havens, despite receiving trillions of dollars in taxpayer support….

The sum, larger than the economic output of Russia, South Korea and Spain, is held in an "opaque and secret network" of 1,608 subsidiaries based offshore, said Oxfam. The charities analysis of the financial affairs of the 50 biggest U.S. corporations comes amid scrutiny of tax havens following the Panama Papers leak….

Apple… [has] some $181 billion held offshore in three subsidiaries. Boston-based conglomerate General Electric, which…has had $28 billion in taxpayer backing… [has] $119 billion stored in 118 tax haven subsidiaries. Microsoft was third with $108 billion….

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

MAY DAY 2016
CELEBRATE WORKERS' POWER



BROOKLYN, NY, APRIL 30—For those few hours, the streets belonged to the working class. The Progressive Labor Party led a march of over 500 people down Flatbush Avenue chanting, "This Whole Damn System — Shut it Down!" to the beat of "Murder She Wrote."

Workers from delis, salons, and stores put their fists in the air and chanted along. A number joined our march and gave us their phone numbers to be contacted. Every person — over 3,000 in all — along the two-mile route bought CHALLENGE, anti-racism/anti-sexism buttons, or a "Don't Vote — Revolt" T-shirt. The long line of communist flags flooded the streets red.

Marchers hailed from all five New York City boroughs, Buffalo, NY, New Jersey, Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Boston and were led by middle school, high school and college students. The marchers' multiracial composition was received enthusiastically in the predominantly Black and Latin working-class Brooklyn neighborhood.

A sound truck with a DJ playing beats at the lead maintained the chants loud in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole, and the atmosphere militant! Drivers honked their horns in salute. Before the march, speakers described many of their struggles, including those against racist deportations and the fight for higher wages at Columbia University. A family member of Tyrone West, a Baltimore Black man murdered by the racist kkkops in July 2013, described the weekly protests they've organized in the struggle for justice against racist police murder.

Lastly, a young Russian-Latin woman described why she recently joined the Progressive Labor Party:

> *When I entered college six years ago, I wanted to become a politician. I wanted to help people, and I recognized politics as the primary driving force of the world. I abandoned this aspiration by my sophomore year. It became clear to me quickly that politicians do not help people, they just talk a lot of hot air and do their best to stay in office. I resigned myself to tuning out politics. Without the ability to make change, political engagement with the world felt like nothing but a depressing burden.*
>
> *I worked my ass off, I played by the rules and still came out a loser. Meanwhile the CEO of Apple gets rich off of virtual slave labor, people can't afford basic health care, and innocent workers are being slain by drone strikes every day. Where the hell is all that change and hope Obama promised us?! I'm committed to PLP because it offers everything that politicians don't: clarity, support and hope. We in PLP fight to expose the root cause of the international working class's suffering: capitalism, a system founded upon mass exploitation of workers in order to maximize profits.*

Fighters Against Kkkops Join Reds

As our march proceeded past intersections where the police have murdered Black youth, a

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